N°. XI. SATURDAY, MARCH 19, 1803.

POLITICS.

IN the suspence and agitation of the moment that is passing by us, the public mind is naturally harassed with reports and rumours, which arise to-day, and evaporate to-morrow; but while they incite and quicken popular curiosity, they animate the national character, and produce preparation.

Ministers have been blamed for withholding the circumstances from the country, whatever they may be, which occasioned his Majesty's message to Parliament. We, however, have heard no reasons assigned to justify such reprobation. If a minister were to advise the King to declare war, without informing the nation of every particular circumstance which led to such a measure, he would be highly criminal; but in matters of preliminary negotiation, it may often happen, that instant publicity would produce the most mischievous consequences. Government appears to have acted with an energy and spirit,

which the occasion requires, and the national character demands. Its conduct has awakened the native spirit of the people, and British honour seems already prepared to renew the career of glory.

His Majesty's message to Parliament breathes a spirit of moderation, while ministers appear to act with firmness and with vigour. They certainly made great sacrifices to obtain peace, and must be very solicitous to preserve it. But the honour and interests of the country must be maintained, and we are ready to maintain them.

The nation at large wished anxiously for peace; but if peace, whatever may be the cause, does not produce the blessings which were expected from it, the people will be as eager to engage in another war, as they were to conclude the last. Our resources are still abundant, our character is unimpaired, our energies have suffered no diminution; and if war were to be declared to-morrow, Britain has no reason to fear the result;—but that event depends entirely and altogether on the will of the French Consul. If he consults the interests of France, peace will continue—if he acts from the impulse of his pride, or is hurried on by the pangs of his resentment, war is inevitable. Louis XIV. commenced the war of 1672, *pour sa propre gloire*, for

his own personal glory; and if Bonaparte engages in it in 1803, it will be to gratify his personal revenge.

The colonial, commercial, and maritime projects of France must be rendered abortive by a war; nor can she derive any national advantage from breaking the peace with England. The French must know and feel this truth, but they are subject to the despotism of the sword; and he who wields it will care little for their opinion, which he can command at his pleasure.

If the First Consul can persuade himself that it would be in his power to invade this country or Ireland, the prospect of such a gratification to his vindictive spirit, would, we doubt not, determine him for war. But this, we trust, cannot appear, even to his sanguine mind, and heated imagination, to be within the reach of his power; and as one British armament accelerated the treaty of Amiens, another may compel the maintenance of it.

Britannia wishes to rest on her spear, but she is ever ready to maintain her rights, to defend her honour, to punish an insulting foe, and to *secure* her future tranquillity.

THE INNOVATOR.

Millé hominum species, et rerum discolor usus. *Persius.*

I have been debating with myself for this day or two, whether I should include under the head of fashion, those minute variations in dress and behaviour, which arise so continually, and quickly die away before something new of their own species. Some few, but very few indeed, maintain their ground for a whole season, while many others are discarded almost before they are remarked. Some few years ago, the custom of disliking to dance was too long prevalent among the beaux. Laziness was then the test of gentility, and he who could yawn oftenest, speak in the most drowsy tone, and stretch his arms and legs widest, was for the time the undisputed leader of fashion. Every other pursuit was treated with the same somniferous contempt. All exertion was a bore, conversation tiresome, doing nothing, and abusing every thing, the only lounge. During this dull fashion, words, of course, were not much in use.

In the most interesting conversation, a beau seldom exceeded two words to each speech, and one of them was always the same: namely, a word of strong import, which supplied the

place of "very." This was surely a most unchristian-like manner of speech, by which every quality, good or bad, every circumstance, every person that was mentioned, was instantly condemned to that misery which the most hardened sinners are taught to expect. Every assembly that was given, every play that was acted, every new amusement proposed, was in the brief style of satire then in vogue, declared to be d—d stupid. Yet the assemblies were as crouded, the playhouse as well attended, and every new undertaking had as many subscribers and supporters, as when people were ever so much pleased. Every young man declared himself bored to death every night, yet every night voluntarily encountered the same misery. This shewed the inclination for abuse not to spring from the heart. For not even the ass, the foolishest of animals, would return the same disagreeable round in the mill, if he were not compelled to it. Therefore the custom altogether was hoped to be as perishable as it has proved.

The beaux of the present time are a much happier race: it is not rare for them to be greatly pleased. The fair daughters of fashion no longer complain of the scarcity of partners, and even can boast of some who wish to dance well, who during the former system

would have been reckoned very foolishly eccentric. The young men who have come into the world since the death of the sulky fashion, never having been taught the custom of displeasure, fully indulge the propensity of youth to laughter; nay, some of the most zealous supporters of the old fashion, have lately, from the example of others, almost condescended to smile. Instead of ignorant listlessness, and drowsy ill-nature, mirth, perhaps too obstreperous, sparring, fencing, and every feat of strength or agility, fully occupy the time of a stylish young man. Activity is fashion, honest emulation buckishness, and hilarity the best recommendation to good company. In a word, the way to be a first-rate blood is to be a man.

The changes of costume in our beaux are too numerous and trifling to be enumerated. It would be endless and uninteresting to pursue the various gradations by which the waistcoat has attained its present conciseness; to discuss the merits of powder or cropping; of the former immense growth, and present decrease of the breeches; the elevation of the coloured handkerchief, from the pocket to the neck; the revival of snuff-boxes; the rivalship of Hessian boots, and leather small-clothes; the exchange of the trim bamboo, or taper whip, for the deformed ash stick; or

the incessant variations in the component parts of the coat. But as all these changes are of some consequence to society, I think they may, in a general way, well come within the scope of my observation.

The privilege of setting fashions is only conferred by silent acquiescence; though perhaps it would be an advantage, if the course of apprenticeship necessary, previous to such an elevation, was exactly defined. The Innovator may perhaps exercise his pen on that subject hereafter. At present he only submits to consideration, whether more deference ought not to be shewn to public opinion, by the inventors of new fashions. If the novelty be disapproved, which is easily discovered by the paucity of those who adopt it, he who gave it rise, should instantly lay it aside: instead of which, I have seen a young man wear a strait-cut drab coat for a whole season, though all else were in dark frocks; another persisted alone in a blue coat, black waistcoat, and olive-coloured velvet breeches; and another had constantly a collar to his coat, so low, as to expose the cape of his waistcoat, which others always concealed. Some deviations from fashion may be allowable. Such as the gentleman who always wears silk stockings, with leather breeches; as it would be a pity that his legs, the only good point

about him, should be obscured. Nor do we object to the gentleman who always let his shirt and waistcoat fly open, as by it he displays the excessive whiteness of his skin. But when there is no reason of this sort, I think it right that an unadopted fashion be instantly discarded, even by the inventor of it. I shall in my next consider, perhaps, some other branches of this subject, or, going over the same ground, discuss the variations of dress and manners in the other sex.

FOR THE PIC NIC.

DEAREST PIC,

I am one of the happiest men living, in my own temper; but whilst every thing that pleases my beloved wife, pleases me, nothing that I do, gives her content; still I go on, in a blundering kind of felicity, and am astonished to see my friends and family less tranquil than myself; for my servants run out of the house, and my acquaintance never come into it. I can't conceive the reason of all this; for I make no complaint, and why people should take up my cause, and be so touchy, whilst I am so contented, puzzles me to account for. I had a very pleasant place in Wiltshire, but my darling found the air

too sharp for her, and we settled ourselves in Essex, where she caught the ague; and being told that Hastings was a certain cure for it, we removed thither! The ague, indeed, left her, but she had spasms in her chest, and we were sent to Malvern. Now, as I am extremely fond of moving, all these manœuvres gave me inexpressible pleasure, and I endeavoured to convince her, how warmly I partook in the satisfaction which this frequent change of place seemed to give her.

She has now taken a thirty years lease of a house in the Wealds of Kent, to which there is positively no road of access, and from which there is no possibility of escape. I must desire you, therefore, to send me no more of your PIC NICS, as they will never reach me, for we have no post; and as, unluckily for me, I have rashly expressed myself dissatisfied with my situation, I have no hope of ever being delivered from it; and so, bidding you everlastingly adieu,

I remain, your's unalterably,

SIMON SUGARSOP.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir,

It is recorded of one of the most luminous geniuses of our island, that having caused a

hole to be cut at the bottom of his study door, to afford free ingress and regress to his favourite cat, he shortly after sent for the carpenter, and directed him to make another, of smaller dimensions, for her kitten to pass through. Now, as it is certain, that a kitten might without inconvenience pass through a hole big enough to serve for a cat, I have always considered this anecdote as a notable proof of the facility with which false conclusions may be drawn from true premises, and of the risk we encounter, when we suffer our feelings to run before our judgment. We can hardly look about us, without seeing instances of this sort of indiscretion; and, though I do not presume to compare the mass of our countrymen to the illustrious philosopher in question, I have good humour enough to place many of their foibles to the account of a similar principle.

Without entering into a detail of the many examples of this, which might easily be adduced, I will at once tell you why I sit down to address you. I am a country gentleman, Sir, who, having little occasion to come to town, know little of what passes there: but being obliged to repair thither, on some pressing business, I indulged myself this evening with a visit to one of your theatres. As it was much crouded, and the plainness of

my appearance not entitling me, in the estimation of the box-keepers, to any great respect, I thought myself well off, in being allowed to occupy a middle seat in one the green boxes, the front row of which was filled by three ladies, while two others sat on the seat with me, and a sixth sat exactly behind me. I will not venture to describe the dress, or rather the undress, of these damsels, as I am apprehensive I could not do it very decently. Suffice it to say, they shewed a great deal more than they ought, and very nearly as much as they could. They were at first extremely attentive to me; but, whether they found me more inclined to take notice of what was passing on the stage, than of them, or from whatever other cause, I know not, no sooner were the remaining vacant places filled by two young fellows in black scratch wigs, high breeches, and projecting neckcloths, than, as if with consent, they not only laid aside all their civility, but began a system of direct hostility. The heroine behind me, remarking that she could not see the scene, leaned forward, with both her elbows pressing violently on my head; and, suddenly recognizing a friend in one of the damsels before me, she bid her look at an acquaintance, in an opposite box. To do this, she arose, and leaning forward, thrust a cer-

tain part of her person in my face. To relieve my embarrassment, the rest of the party burst into a fit of laughter, and fired around me, in all directions, such a volley of obscenity, as fairly put me to flight.

As I walked home, I could not but meditate on my adventure, and wonder what could induce the managers of our regular theatres, which ought to be the schools of virtue and morality, thus to degrade them into mere brothels. There are enough of them, surely, in your wide metropolis, to answer all the purposes which can be expected from them, without opening new doors to prostitution, and bringing it forward in the most conspicuous point of view. This, of course, never could have been the motive by which the managers are influenced; nor have I the ingenuity to devise any other than that which actuated the humane philosopher, in the case of the cat and the kitten, that when fashion had given a *grande entrée* below, to the impures of her class, their benevolence gave a lesser one above, to those of inferior pretensions. The philosopher indeed, did no harm by his whim, whereas, his imitators expose themselves to a reproach, which, as individuals, they would not be desirous of incurring; the philosopher, too, had no mercenary motives for the exercise of his good-

nature; but it is something more than probable, that your managers would have left these naked harpies to find a reception in places more proper for them, had they not looked to their treasurer's account a little more accurately than they did to public decency.

I can hardly flatter myself that, when the grievance of which I complain has taken such deep root, my remonstrances can be of much avail. To notice it, however, in your paper, may perhaps induce others to take up the subject, which is now risen to a pitch of enormity that calls aloud for reformation.

I am, Sir,

Your constant reader,

March 17, 1803. RUSTICUS.

THE HAPPY CHRISTENING.

Thomas weds—and four months barely pass o'er his head,
When his spouse (God be thank'd!) of a boy 's brought to bed.
" Now what shall we call him, my dear?" said his wife,
" Let me think," answer'd Tom.—" Call him COURIER, my life;
" For he 's travell'd a journey of nine months, or more,
" To my joy and delight, in the short space of four!"

THE PRINTER's CAULDRON.

Scene—*A dark room: in the middle a great cauldron burning. Thunder—enter three Printer's Devils.*

FIRST DEVIL.

Thrice the watchman gave his knock,

SECOND DEVIL.

Twice—and once has crow'd the cock:

THIRD DEVIL.

Our master cries, 'Tis five o'clock.'

ALL.

Now your sev'ral schemes display,
To make the paper of the day:—

SECOND DEVIL.

Spy, that standing on cold stone,
Names and titles one by one,
Catchest at the doors of fashion,
Haste to bring your motley trash in;
Packwood's puffs, and state of weather,
Hints of who and who's together,
(Paid, to contradict to-morrow,
Mistake, inserted to our sorrow)
Fluttering follies, light as vapour,
Rise you to the top o'th' paper.

ALL.

Double, double, toil and trouble,
Touch the cash—the nation bubble.

FIRST DEVIL.

Braham—Soldier tir'd—Mad Bess—
Case of singular distress,

Speech of egotistic pleader,
String of coaches made by Leader,
Fashionable invalids,
Morning dresses, widows' weeds,
Lobby quarrels, satisfaction,
Rout in May-fair, crim-con action,
Patent soles, that never faulter,
Doctors Brodum and Sir Walter,
Pun, and vive la bagatelle,
Schemes to make our paper sell.

ALL.

Double, double, toil and trouble,
Touch the cash—the nation bubble.

SECOND DEVIL.

Bonaparté, Paris fashions,
Chapels, Cyprian assignations:
Captain Sash, the sea-side shark—
Slander's arrow, shot i'th' dark.
Villa of Roehampton Jew,
Horrid murder done at Kew;
Queries, critical corrections,
Galvanistic resurrections,
Treatise on the moon's eclipse,
Pain for cheeks, and salve for lips;
Stupid pun, birth-strangled jest—
Portsmouth letter—wind north-west,
And thus our merit stands confest!

ALL.

Double, double, toil and trouble,
Touch the cash—the nation bubble.

THIRD DEVIL.

Cool it with an empty boast,
That every day we sell the most,"
'Tis done—behold the Morning Post!

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THE ESSAYIST.

JOHN DE LANCASTER.
[Continued.]

"It was a custom with John de Lancaster every morning, after he had dressed himself, to be attended by his harper, blind David Williams, a minstrel, as eminent in his art as any the principality of Wales had to boaſt; it was now the hour for David to present himself, and nobody was permitted to enter or approach the chamber during the time he was in it. The soul of John de Lancaster seemed in a peculiar manner to sympathize with the melody of the harp. He had not only a national predilection for that instrument, in common with his countrymen, but professed an hereditary attachment to it, as a true de Lancaster, whose ancestors had worn it on their shields from the days of King Bardus.

"There was a stool, on which the minstrel always sat, during his performance, and an easy capacious chair, in which the patron reposed himself, and indulged his meditations. By signals audibly given on the arms of the aforesaid chair, blind David was wont to regulate the character and spirit of his movements. It was a correspondence without

language, perfectly understoood by the performer, who no sooner comprehended that soft music was the order of the morning, than he began a prelude so exquisitely tender, that the strings scarcely whispered under the fingers of the sightless bard, who at length, being filled with the inspiration of the muse, broke forth extemporaneously into the following strain:—

" Shine forth, bright Sun, and gild the day,
That greets our new-born hope with light:
Give me to feel thy cheering ray,
Tho' these dark orbs are wrapt in night.

Yet heav'n in pity hath allow'd
These hands to wake the tuneful string:
The Muse her influence hath bestow'd,
And taught her sightless bard to sing.

Sound then, my harp, thy softest strain,
Melodious solace of the blind,
Airs that might heal the mother's pain,
And soothe the father's anxious mind.

Hush, hush! for now the infant sleeps—
Let no rude string disturb its rest;
And now instinctively it creeps
To nestle at its parent's breast.

Ah, luckless me! these curtain'd eyes
Shall never view its lovely face;
I ne'er must see that Star arise,
The day-spring of an ancient race.

Father of life, in mercy take
This infant to thy nursing care,
And for the virtuous grandsire's sake
Oh hear the humble minstrel's pray'r.

Grant that this babe, as yet the last
Of Lancaster's time-honoured name,
When coming ages shall have past,
May rank amongst the first in fame."

" 'Thou hast sung well, David,' said the patron, 'and I desire thee to accept and wear upon thy finger this antique berryl, on which is engraved the head of Homer, thy prototype, if not in genius altogether, in misfortune however. Thy muse, old man, has not been unpropitious: go thy way therefore, and cherish thy spirit with the best flask of metheglin, that my cellars afford. I know it is thy favourite Helicon, which at once gives nerves to thy fingers, and nourishment to thy fancy. Get thee hence, blind bard, and be merry.'

" Old David devoutly drew the ring on his his finger, and with a profound obeisance, replied:—'I thank you and bless you, my munificent patron. I will drink prosperity to the illustrious house of de Lancaster, and the new-born heir thereof. It has stood from the old time when the old world was deluged, may it stand to the time when the new one shall be dissolved!'

" With these words the minstrel took his leave and departed, whilst John de Lancaster, tingling in every nerve with the rapture of the music, and the conscious recollection of

having recruited his pedigree with a fresh descendant from Noah, set out for the breakfast-room, displaying on his person a new suit after an old fashion, of bright scarlet, ornamented with enormous gold-worked buttons plentifully bestowed; a prodigious expanse of perriwig, sable as the plume of the raven, and unpowd-red, with rolled silk stockings, and high-topt square-toed shoes, which resounding upon every step of the oaken stairs, as he descended, gave loud warning of his approach to the family then assembled to receive him.

"His son and daughter, with Colonel and Mrs. Wilson, in turn paid him their congratulations, and received his cordial embrace; for in his heart he was affectionate, and his courtesy was of the cast of the chivalric ages. So many were the messages of inquiry from the neighbours round the castle, that almost every servant and retainer belonging to his household made an errand to present themselves, and pay homage to their good master, which was not the less profound from the awe they were impressed with by the splendor in which they now saw him arrayed; and if they exceeded in their reverence towards a frail mortal like themselves, certain it is, that the stately person, and commanding countenance of John de Lancaster, were such as, in their

ease, might serve for apology: his stature was none of the tallest, but well proportioned and erect; his frame athletic, but without a trace of clumsiness or vulgarity; his voice, his gait, his address, were all of that character, which is peculiarly adapted to impose respect.

" When breakfast was over, they adjourned to the gallery, where the pedigree was unrolled, and displayed at full length on the floor. It was a splendid record, and exhibited several figures gaudily emblazoned. When Wilson cast his eyes upon it, as he entered the gallery, he turned to his wife, and said in a whisper, ' this is ridiculous enough, I confess, but the harmless foibles of good and worthy men should not expose them to our contempt.' Then addressing himself to John de Lancaster, he said, ' it is well there is this gallery in your house, my good Sir, else we should not have enjoyed this fine spectacle, without putting some of your ancestors to inconvenience.' Whereupon passing on till he came to the upper end of the roll, where Japheth, son of Noah, held his post, and pointing to a figure on the second step below him, he gravely asked who that majestic personage might be in kingly robes, wearing a crown on his head, and carrying a sceptre in his hand.

" John de Lancaster as gravely replied,

that it was *Samothes*, the first sovereign monarch, of this island, from him called *Samothea*.

" Wilson bowed, and obtruded no more questions.

" Whilst the ceremony of enrollment was in operation, ' I record this infant,' said de Lancaster, ' by the name of John, although he hath not yet received the sacred rite of baptism, because the name of John and Robert have been alternately adopted by my family, from the very earliest time of the Christian æra to the present. Write them down therefore by the name of John.'

" Old David instantly struck up, *Of a noble race was Shenkin*, and the castle echoed to his harp."

Jam satis est. PUBLIUS SYRUS.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir,

The day following your publication being sabbath, some few of your readers may reserve your paper for that day, to whom the following observations may not be unacceptable.

Among the many benefits enjoyed and abused by mankind, surely none is more peculiarly so than the sabbath day; a day set apart by the direction of Providence, in which

the labourer should cease from his toil, and the merchant from his traffic. The Father of makind instituted this septenial jubilee at an early age of the world, to commemorate the completion of this earth's creation, and to allow a suspension of labour to every class of mankind. The rigor with which it was to be observed was a necessary restriction upon the avarice and plenipotence of *Eastern* masters, who otherwise would not have foregone the rights of tyranny in compelling their slaves to perpetual exertion. In Eastern countries, the human body does not require that action and motion necessary in European climates, to the preservation of health. Amidst the blaze of oriental heat, a supine and idle existence constitutes the greatest felicity; it is thence no task to confine people to their houses, while with us such a restriction would become a grievance; and it is not required by Him, who appropriated this day to rest, that we should spend it in the house of bondage.

I see no crime in a little journey into the country, where it is not attended with extravagance and excess. The human mind, if rightly formed, will admire the variety and charms in creation—it will expand with satisfaction—it will read the *Eternal* in his works. But these are not the boasted effects of *natural religion.* We do not, as some *profound*

philosophers affirm, imbibe sentiments of morality and religion from viewing the broad expanse of the heavens, unless we have been taught *a priori*, the existence of a *great Supreme*. Then indeed the beauty and harmony of his works confirm our belief, and enlarge our ideas of his omnipotence. It is to the good sense of mankind that we owe any remains of religion in times like these, when ignorance on the part of irregular professors, and falsehood and malignity on the part of philosophers, so powerfully tend to turn faith into ridicule, and banish from amongst us all distinction of days. But he is the true philosopher who rises above all these, and plants in the hearts of his children, his servants, and his friends, that *only principle* which can enable them to sustain the changes of eventful life, the temptation of alluring crime, and to behold death with calmness and hope. It is a field of too extended a nature to be traversed in the short compass of an essay, to repeat again to the world all the reasons that we have to support revealed religion, whether we think as men, as citizens, or as philosophers: it is a maxim that even politicians allow, that unless religion influences the mind, in vain are coercive laws and penal codes; crime will creep forward, and undermine the fabric of society, till its ruins involve all things in promiscuous destruction.

To endeavour to influence public principles by a few public institutions, with observations on the present amusements of the sabbath, will be the subject of another essay; if you do not think that the insertion of this will be altogether a vain attempt to stimulate the apathy which at present extends its magic wand over the governing, and over the governed.

G. W.